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(U) CHINA: IMPORTANT STATEMENTS ON TAIWAN
REUNIFICATION SINCE NORMALIZATION OF
US-CHINA RELATIONS: A CHRONOLOGY

Summary

(U) The People's Republic of China's policy of peaceful reunification with Taiwan, officially inaugurated in January 1979, has been amplified by Chinese leaders in major pronouncements including Ye Jianying's nine-point proposal of September 1981 and Deng Xiaoping's "one country, two systems" formula publicized for the first time in June 1983. The Chinese have portrayed their approach to Taiwan as very flexible, noting that Taiwan, unlike Hong Kong, can retain its current system of government and even its military after reunification. Beijing has steadfastly refused, however, to renounce the use of force to achieve reunification.

(C/NF) Although they have deplored Taiwan's official rejection of their overtures on this issue, Chinese leaders have affirmed their patience in awaiting the result of what they consider to be the historically inevitable trend toward national reunification. Until the settlement of the Hong Kong issue last year, Beijing's public statements made no mention of any US role in promoting Taiwan's reunification, although the issue was broached privately. Since then, however, the Chinese have begun to encourage the US to assume a more active role in facilitating the process.

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(U) January 1, 1979. A New Year's Day message from the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) to "compatriots in Taiwan" called for "reunification" (rather than "liberation") at an "early date," announced the cessation of People's Liberation Army bombardment of offshore

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islands, and asked for contacts and exchanges to begin. It promised to respect the status quo on Taiwan so as not to cause any injury to the people of Taiwan.

(U) January 1979. Deng told a US Senate delegation that China wanted to avoid the use of force and that Taiwan could maintain autonomy and its own armed forces after reunification. He said Taiwan authorities would retain local power and also obtain central government posts (not reported in the open Chinese press).

(U) October 1979. Deng gave an interview to Asahi Shimbun, adding to the above that Taiwan could retain its present capitalist social system and lifestyle. He called for cooperation between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang (not reported in the open Chinese press).

(U) September 30, 1981. As acting head of state, NPC Chairman Ye Jianying in an interview to Xinhua gave a formal "nine-point proposal" for peace talks between the CCP and the KMT (rather than between the two governments) on a "reciprocal" (implicitly not equal) basis, preceded by informal discussions and exchanges. He endorsed Deng's unofficial promises by offering "a high degree of autonomy" for Taiwan as a "special administrative region" and noninterference by the Chinese Government in local affairs including legal rights, foreign investments, and economic and cultural relations.

(U) October 9, 1981. At a rally on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the 1911 Revolution led by the KMT, CCP chief Hu Yaobang personally offered to meet with KMT President Chiang Ching-kuo to discuss reunification.

(U) July 24, 1982. Liao Chengzhi, a prominent official with family ties to the Chiang family, wrote a letter to President Chiang offering special treatment for the KMT involving "co-existence" and "mutual supervision" between the two parties, as they cooperated in building China.

(U) December 4, 1982. The NPC adopted a new State Constitution; Article 31 stated that the PRC could "establish special administrative regions when necessary," to be regulated by laws enacted by the NPC at the time according to specific conditions.

(U) June 1983. Premier Zhao Ziyang in his work report to the annual meeting of the NPC used the term "peaceful reunification" (rather than the usual "reunification") to describe policy toward Taiwan and Hong Kong.

(U) June 26, 1983. Deng met with a Chinese-American professor, Winston Yang, and pointed to greater flexibility on the

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post-reunification status of Taiwan: Taiwan could continue to import foreign weaponry so long as its forces did not constitute a threat to the mainland. The PRC would not send troops to the island. Taiwan could keep its own flag, issue its own visas and passports, and maintain independent judicial and legislative systems. It could use a "Taiwan, China"--rather than a "Taiwan, PRC"--designation to maintain "appropriate" representation in the Asian Development Bank and other international organizations. Deng spoke of a transitional period of up to "a hundred years" that could precede full reunification (emphasis added; these specifics were not included in Xinhua's report of the meeting).

(U) Deng also hinted that China would be willing to pledge not to use force against Taiwan, perhaps in an exchange of mutual promises, when he said that reunification "does not mean the conquest of Taiwan by the mainland, nor vice versa... 'peaceful reunification' has come to be common language for both the Kuomintang and the Communist Party." He stressed that peace talks would be "unofficial" talks between the two parties on a fully "equal" basis. And he stated that reunification "will take time" (Xinhua's report of these statements engendered widespread speculation, including in Taipei).

(S/NP) February 22, 1984. Deng raised the "one nation, two systems" (capitalist and socialist) formula as a solution for Taiwan and Hong Kong in a conversation with US former National Security Adviser Brzezinski (in late 1984, the Chinese press would trace Deng's basic "idea" back to his September 1982 meeting with United Kingdom Prime Minister Thatcher and his June 1983 conversation with Winston Yang).

(S/NP) Deng seemed to fudge the previously sacrosanct distinction between the "internal" problem of Taiwan and the "international" disputes involving third parties when he dwelt at length on the similarity of this formula to confederation solutions, loosely defined, to a number of long-term and "explosive" international issues including Germany, Korea, the Falklands, Japan's Northern Territories, and the Spratlys. He also mentioned the possibility of "joint development" of such disputed areas, while he set aside sovereignty claims for later resolution (Xinhua reported only Deng's reference to "two political systems within one China").

(U) May 15, 1984. Zhao's annual report to the NPC, which was later ratified as law by the NPC, formally endorsed the policy of "one country, two systems" as the appropriate means of peaceful reunification with Taiwan.

(U) June 22-23, 1984. In comments to Hong Kong visitors, Deng gave the strongest statements to date of PRC patience and

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peaceful intent when he stressed that the new policy would never change and declared that if reunification:

"...cannot be solved peacefully, then it must be solved by force. This would do neither side any good.... If China cannot be reunified in 100 years, then it will be reunified in 1000 years. In my opinion, the only solution to this problem is to practice two systems in one country" (emphasis added).

He also stressed that this approach to Hong Kong and Taiwan could be used for a series of similar world problems, concluding that "new problems required new solutions."

(U) October 1, 1984. Deng gave an even stronger version of his views in his National Day address:

"We stand for peaceful reunification with Taiwan.... Our policy in this regard is known to all and will not change.... Being an irresistible trend, the peaceful reunification of our motherland will sooner or later come true" (emphasis added).

(U) October 2, 1984. Deng expanded on his views in meeting overseas Chinese scientists, pointing out that:

"In putting forward 'one country, two systems' we have also considered what methods should be adopted to resolve international disputes. Since there are many knots here and there in the world which are difficult to untie, I think it is possible to use this method to settle disputes between some countries."

He stressed that China's interest in pressing such solutions was to prevent armed conflicts over these unsettled disputes in order to guarantee a peaceful environment for modernization.

(U) October 10, 1984. Deng discussed the Hong Kong and Taiwan issues with Federal Republic of Germany Chancellor Kohl, emphasizing, "The Taiwan question requires time to handle. Therefore we must be patient."

(U) October 11, 1984. In response to questions by a Japanese visitor about how long China would wait for a Taiwan solution, Deng reiterated his National Day comments and said that "China is very patient." He qualified this by revealing comments to Secretary of Defense Weinberger in September 1983 to the effect that "if some movement happens on Taiwan, we will have to react" (the foreign press stressed Deng's reference to a blockade of Taiwan; Xinhua reported none of his more negative comments). Deng

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said that his real point was the need for the problem to be "well taken care of between China and the US."

(U) October 22, 1984. In his address to the Central Advisory Commission (published on December 31), Deng praised his reunification policy and underscored that the Hong Kong resolution would have direct impact on the Taiwan question. He also stressed that his formulae of "one country, two systems" and "joint development" had widespread applicability and that solutions "should be acceptable to all parties concerned." He said that the only difference between the Hong Kong and Taiwan solutions would be greater "lenience" in the latter case, specifically meaning retention by Taiwan of its armed forces (according to other media commentary, the difference is that Hong Kong is an international dispute and Taiwan is an internal problem). He concluded his discussion by stating, "We insist on solving the Taiwan question in a peaceful manner, but we do not renounce non-peaceful means to achieve reunification with Taiwan" (emphasis added).

(U) October 23, 1984. Deng repeated very similar statements to former Japanese Prime Minister Suzuki.

(U) Late December 1984. The Chinese media effusively praised the Hong Kong settlement, citing foreign comments regarding the great wisdom and far-ranging international and historical significance of Deng's "one country, two systems" concept.

(U) January 19, 1985. At a meeting with Lord L. Kadoorie, chairman of the China Light and Power Co. of Hong Kong, following the signing of a contract setting up a Guangdong nuclear power joint venture, Deng stated that because agreement had been reached on Hong Kong, "Our next step is to solve the Taiwan problem. Our terms are more than generous: Taiwan can retain its army."

(U) March 6, 1985. A front-page article in the China Daily quoted President Li Xiannian as saying China "will allow it [Taiwan] to maintain all its existing political, administrative, and military systems. It can also keep its special agents system." Previous statements by Chinese leaders had not mentioned the special agents system.

(U) Also on March 6, Deng Yingchao, chairwoman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress and an influential leader on the Taiwan issue, delivered a speech at the Second National Conference of Representatives of Taiwan Compatriots on the Mainland. She noted that Chinese policy toward the Taiwan question is "flexible" and that the Chinese will continue to "work in accordance with established principles and policy, in the hope of establishing contact between the two parties and properly solving the Taiwan question as soon as possible" (emphasis added).

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(U) March 15, 1985. An authoritative article in Hongqi explained the principles of the "one country, two systems" concept, noting that it "is constitutionally and legally guaranteed. The different systems implemented in some regions will be retained for a fairly long period of time" (emphasis added). The article also asserted that the regions of a unified country under the system "are not entitled to exercise state sovereignty, or the power of the entire country in terms of diplomacy, national defense, declaring peace, and so on."

(U) March 21, 1985. A "Forum on State Affairs" radio broadcast to Taiwan quoted Deng Xiaoping as saying, "After the reunification of China, Taiwan can practice capitalism, while the mainland can practice socialism. We can implement the policy of 'one country, two systems,' and neither side will harm the other."

(U) May 10, 1985. In an interview with Pai Hsing director Lu Keng, Hu Yaobang added a new wrinkle to the Taiwan question with his off-the-cuff remarks regarding the use of force to achieve reunification. He said: "Everybody in the world knows that we do not have enough strength for the time being." He estimated this condition as lasting "four, five, seven, or eight years." He added that if, after China has developed its national defense, "the broad masses of the Taiwan people wish to return and a small number of people do not wish to return, it will be necessary to use some force."

(U) Hu commented that Deng had set reunification as one of the three major tasks of the 1990s (along with fighting hegemonism and accomplishing economic modernization). Hu seemed, however, to back away from any deadline for reunification, saying that "if there [is] no prospect for solving the Taiwan problem in the 1980s, then there [are] prospects in the 1990s.... Regarding the question of the decade, why should such a major affair be counted on the fingers, in the fashion of writing a novel?"

(U) May 16, 1985. Deng Yingchao was quoted by Pai Hsing as predicting "medium- or small-scale turmoil" following the death of President Chiang.

(U) June 5, 1985. Xinhua cited a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying that China had never made a commitment not to take non-peaceful means to solve the Taiwan issue, simply because such a commitment would make peaceful reunification impossible. The spokesman said, however, "We sincerely hope and insist that peaceful means should be used to solve the Taiwan issue. We are patient, but this cannot be decided by us alone."

(U) June 22, 1985. When asked by a Wen Wei Po reporter to comment on the use of armed force to settle the Taiwan issue, Huan

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Xiang, an influential foreign policy adviser, stated: "We will be patient enough to wait for realization of the peaceful reunification, but if the peaceful reunification cannot be realized in the next 20 or 30 years, we will have to consider other ways to reunify the motherland."

(U) July 29, 1985. During President Li's visit to the US, State Councilor Ji Pengfei stated in response to a reporter's questions concerning a specific timetable for settlement of the Taiwan issue and for the realization of reunification: "We have no specific timetable. We hope to see the realization of reunification as soon as possible, and we will do everything we can to resort to peaceful means to settle the Taiwan question through negotiations."

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